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ABSTRACT

Noting that the topic of death is pervasive in literature for children and young adults, this annotated bibliography of material in the ERIC database is designed to make classroom teachers aware of books and literature available on the topic of death. Some of the 32 annotations are reviews of books dealing with death, some are booklists containing books on death and dying in fiction and nonfiction, some contain teaching approaches, and others give an overview of the topic. The books, conference papers, and journal articles represented in the annotated bibliography were published between 1981 and 1990. (RS)

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Death in Literature for Children and Young Adults

by Arlene Sullivan

The topic of death is pervasive in literature for children and young adults and appears in everything from the classics to the realistic fiction of such popular writers as Paul Zindel, Judith Voight, and Robert Cormier. The purpose of this *FAST Bib* is to make classroom teachers aware of books and literature available on the topic of death that may assist them when teaching materials containing this difficult and troubling topic for children and young adult readers. Some of the citations in this *FAST Bib* are reviews of books dealing with death, some are booklists containing recently published books on death and dying in fiction or nonfiction, some contain teaching approaches, and others give an overview of the topic.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the FAST Bib format. Three types of citations are provided in the bibliography: ERIC documents, journal articles, and papers.

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Overview

Danielson, Kathy Everts. "Death: Realism in Children's Books." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Plains Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, 1985. 15 p. [ED 270 785]

Discusses overall theme of death in children's books and how it can be divided topically into pets, parents, grandparents, siblings, and peers.

Eiss, Harry. "Materials for Children about Nuclear War." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Popular Culture Association, 1988. 15 p.[ED 297 339]

Discusses how children today must live with the knowledge that at any instant the entire human race might be annihilated because of nuclear war. Explores Dr. Seuss's *The Butter Battle Book*, Hersey's *Hiroshima*, Ibuse's *Black Rain* and Judy Blume's book, *Tiger Eyes*.

Gough, John. "Tapestries of Image and Emotion: The Novels of Christobel Mattingly," *Children's Literature in Education*, v18 p97-104 Sum 1987.

Examines the use of imagery and poetic language in the two novels of Christobel Mattingly, an Australian writer of picture story books.

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Shows that Mattingly deals with sensitive issues of childhood and adolescence, such as moving to a foreign country, teenage sexuality, and death, in subtle and mature ways.

Greenlaw, M. Jean. "Books as They Reflect the Reader: An Exploration." 1981. 15p. [ED 210 643]

Explores the impact of books on young readers, and briefly examines several titles that can help children and adolescents understand the world around them. Following a brief review of research studies that have shown that reading literature affects the values that children hold, the paper discusses titles dealing with death, personal fears, disabilities, differences, and identity. A final section cautions against using the titles in any intentional bibliotherapy effort. A list of 49 books for children and young people concludes the paper.

Henke, James T. "The Death of the Mother, the Rebirth of the Son: 'Millie's Boy' and 'Father Figure,'" *Children's Literature in Education*, v14 n1 p21-34 Spr 1983.

Examines how the two very different novels—*Millie's Boy* and *Father Figure*—treat the commonplace theme of the quest for mature identity in a similar but very uncommon fashion.

Hipple, Theodore W.; and others. "Twenty Adolescent Novels (and More) that Counselors Should Know About," *School-Counselor*, v32 n2 p142-48 Nov 1984.

Presents descriptions of novels for adolescents that can be useful in school counseling. Includes topics on death and dying.

Litton, Joyce A. "How to be a Young Member of the Middle Class: Socialization in the Novels of Judy Blume." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Popular Culture Association, 1988. 14p. [ED 295 192]

Discusses Blume's books on the topic of death in *Forever* and *Tiger Eyes*; her treatment of death gives young people some idea about what normal feelings are, as Blume defines them.

Moore, Timothy E. and Mae, Reet. "Who Dies and Who Cries: Death and Bereavement in Children's Literature," *Journal of Communication*, v37 n4 p52-64 1987.

Analyzes the portrayal of death and bereavement in children's literature, focusing on the central character in the book, the death, and the subsequent effect of the death on the central character.

Plotz, Judith. "The Disappearance of Childhood: Parent Child Role Reversals in *After The First Death* and *A Solitary Blue*," *Children's Literature in Education*, v19 n2 p67-79 Sum 1988.

Summarizes several leading theories regarding the disappearance of childhood in modern society. Examines this pattern of eroding childhood in two young adult novels, Robert Cormier's *After the First Death* and Cynthia Voight's *A Solitary Blue*.

Raburn, Josephine. "Who-o-o Reads Ghost Stories?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Reading Council of the International Reading Association, 1982. 28p. [ED 218 590]

Discusses how ghost stories help young children understand their own emotions and feelings and helps them to explore that unknown area—death.

Schwarcz, Joseph H. "Working through Children's Developmental and Existential Stress in Picture Books." Paper presented at "The Illustrator as Storyteller" Conference, 1984. 29p. [ED 258 193]

Discusses how themes of existential and developmental stress are appearing in picture books, including the search for identity, death, and annihilation.

Winfield, Evelyn. "Books for Changing Families to Read and Share," *PTA Today*, v8 n7 p22-23 May 1983.

Discusses books that show children and adolescents coping with current social and family problems, including death.

Booklists

Abrahamson, Richard F. *Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students*. National Council of Teachers of English. 1988. p581-582. [ED 298 496]

Lists 1200 books arranged alphabetically under 47 main categories, including death and dying.

Crase, Darrell. "Updating Death Education for Children and Adolescents: The Literature Connection." 1988. 18p. [ED 300 348]

Presents a comprehensive bibliography of publications on the subject of death education. Lists articles and books which have focused on various dimensions of dying and death and those that deal exclusively with suicide and life-threatening behavior.

Davis, Gary L. "A Content Analysis of Fifty-Seven Children's Books with Death Themes," *Child Study Journal*, v16 n1 p39-54 1986.

Analyzes 57 selected children's books to identify the kinds of information presented about death, the place of death, who died, cause of death, feelings expressed by the dying person, the nature of the funeral, and questions asked by the child characters.

McBride, William G. *High Interest—Easy Reading: A Booklist for Junior and Senior High School Students*. National Council of Teachers of English. 1990. 144p. [ED 323 517]

Contains over 400 titles of fiction and non- fiction books published between 1987 and 1989; death is one of the many categories listed.

Ordal, Carol C. "Death as Seen in Books Suitable for Young Children," *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, v14 n3 p249-77 1983-84.

Summarizes and evaluates 34 children's books that deal with death, in terms of their usefulness in helping children understand the concept of death. Included are books dealing with death in plants, animals, and persons. All of the books chosen for analysis explain death in a positive way.

Pearl, Patricia. "Helping Children through Books: A Selected Booklist." Church and Synagogue Library Association, Portland, OR. 1990. 31p. [ED 316 255]

Includes books intended for children from a pre-school to a sixth-grade reading level. Involves the death of children, of an older person, of a parent, and of a pet.

Rudman, Masha K. *Children's Literature: An Issues Approach*. Second Edition. Longman, Inc. 1984 [ED 247 594]

References selections of children's books by considering the appropriateness of such books for bibliotherapy. Offers suggestions for activities that teachers or concerned adults may use. Includes topics of death in children's books.

Instruction

Cline, Ralph M. "A Killer Curriculum: Violence and Death in Literature," *Pointer*, v32 n4 p21-23 Sum 1988.

Discusses how a teacher of gifted high school students looks at the large amount of murder, suicide, and violence in recommended reading lists. Concludes that, though this literature should be read by students, teachers need to counterbalance it with books emphasizing happiness and hope.

Garner, Alan. "The Edge of the Ceiling," *Horn Book Magazine*, v60 n5 p559-65 Oct 1984.

Describes how the author, during his childhood illnesses, faced what appeared to be his imminent death, and how he came to certain realizations about life and his place in it.

Goodman, Gayle. "James' Grandfathers," *Language Arts*, v84 n1 p40-53 Jan 1987.

Records the attempts of a very young child to construct his own understanding of what it means to die and of the social impact of death within his own culture. Includes transcripts in which the child uses narrative to frame his first, tentative ideas about death, and responds to literature to further extend his understanding.

Hall, Kristen. "The Fig Tree's Lessons," *Humanities*, v9 p22-23 Sept-Oct 1988.

Describes the dramatization of Katherine Anne Porter's story, "The Fig Tree's Lessons," and the process by which this story was made accessible to an audience of 8- to 12-year-old children. Notes that this program attempts to avoid the simplification of the profound human experience of dealing with death.

"Literature, Literary Response, and the Teaching of Literature," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, v43 n1-5 13p July-Dec 1982. [ED 225 165]

Deals with a variety of topics, including death, in selected Puritan works of children's literature.

"Literature, Literacy Response, and the Teaching of Literature," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, v42 n7-12 14p Jan-June 1982. [ED 218 672]

Addresses various topics, including the effect of death awareness on the protagonists of selected adolescent novels.

Molnar, Linda Ann. "Elementary Death Education," Paper presented at the Convention of the Louisiana Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1983. [ED 230 518]

Discusses the value of death education at the elementary school level, and points out that death education can be helpful in preparing children to cope with death by reducing anxiety.

Moore, David W.; and others. "Understanding Characters' Reactions to Death," *Journal of Reading*, v26 n6 p540-44 Mar 1983.

Suggests a structured response format for interpreting literary characters in death-related literature, using Kubler-Ross's five stages confronting death.

Prince, Barbara. "Growing Up: Getting in Touch with Me. A Value Clarification Resource Manual for Pre-School Teachers." Texas State Dept. of Human Resources, Abilene, TX. 1983. 108p. [ED 238 527]

Serves as a guide for preschool teachers in teaching value-related concepts and in providing children with experiences that foster self-understanding, self-acceptance, and strong relationships with others.

"Teacher Characteristics and Teacher Education in Reading and English Language Arts Instruction," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, v42 n4-12 12pp Jan-June 1982. [ED 218 602]

Deals with a variety of topics, including teachers' anxiety levels in response to using children's literature on death in the classroom.

Tunnell, Michael O. "Books in the Classroom," *Horn Book Magazine*, v63 n4 p509-11 Jul-Aug 1987.

Offers an appreciation of *Tuck Everlasting*, a young adult novel by Natalie Babbitt, that deals with death and the purpose of life, and recommends it particularly for reading aloud in the classroom.

Wass, Hannelore. "Resources for Helping Young Children Deal with Death." 1982. 25p. [ED 233 254]

Contains selected resources (1965-1983) to help parents and teachers assist young children with their death-related concerns.

Weiner, J. Pamela. "Adolescents, Literature, and Work with Youth," *Child and Youth Services*, v7 n1-2 pv-137 Spr 1985.

Divides theme issues into five categories, including Death and Bereavement in Young People's Literature.

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